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THE NATIONAL DECLINE

OF THE

MIAMI INDIANS

BY

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THE NATIONAL DECLINE OF THE MIAMI INDIANS.

In the northern part of the state of Indiana on the 28th of November, 1840, the chiefs and the head men of the Miami nation were holding a council with two commissioners of the government of the United States. The council ground was at the forks of the river Wabash. A treaty—it was the thirteenth treaty between the Miamies and the United States—was, with the usual formality, laid before the red men. The first article of that treaty, which was cautiously explained in the presence of the Indians by skillful interpreters, was in these words:

"The Miami tribe of Indians do hereby cede to the United States all that tract of land on the south side of the Wabash river not heretofore ceded, and commonly known as the 'residue of the Big Reserve'—*being all of their remaining lands in Indiana.*"

For different reasons, and with various emotions, twenty chiefs and headmen, some willingly, but others reluctantly, signed the treaty; and thus the last remnant of the National Domain of the Miamies passed from them forever.

If we look backward, through a period of more than one hundred and fifty years, to the dawning of civilization in the west, at every point where a ray of light illumines the condition of the Miami Indians, we shall behold mournful evidences of the downward progress of a great aboriginal nation, and we shall learn, too, something of the slow and sad means by

which a vast and beautiful region has been reclaimed from a state of barbarism.

According to the best traditional authorities, the dominion of the Miami confederacy extended, for a long period of time, over that part of the state of Ohio which lies west of the Scioto river—over the whole of Indiana—over the southern part of Michigan—and over that part of the state of Illinois which lies southeast of the Fox river and the river Illinois. The Miamies proper, whose old national name was Twightwess, formed the eastern and most powerful branch of this confederacy. They have preserved no tradition of their migration as a tribe, from one country to another. The great extent of the territory which was once claimed by them is some evidence of the degree of national importance which they formerly maintained among the Indian tribes of North America, but neither the names nor the numbers of the several kindred tribes of the ancient Miami confederacy can now be stated with accuracy. Within the boundaries of their territory the arms of hostile nations have clashed on many a battle field—barbarism opposed the advance of civilization—truth struggled against error—creed rose in hostility against creed—race fought against race—and over the field of conflict, for more than a hundred years, the proud banners of monarchy floated until at last they were struck down by the strong arms of free men. In thirty hostile expeditions, warriors of the white race have carried their desolating arms into the territory which was claimed by the Miamies. Twenty battle fields, and the ashes of fifty Indian towns are among the memorials of the triumphs of civilized man in this region.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, and perhaps for a long period before that time, the Miamies had villages at various suitable places within the boundaries of their large territory. Some of these villages were found on the banks of the Scioto—a few were situated in the country about the

head waters of the Great Miami—some stood on the banks of the river Maumee—others on the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan—and many were founded on the borders of the Wabash and on some of the principal tributaries of that river. The villages which stood on the banks of the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan, those which lay about the head waters of the Maumee, and those which stood on the borders of the river Wabash, were visited by Catholic missionaries and French fur traders before the middle of the eighteenth century, but the several periods at which the French *founded settlements* at or near the principal Miami villages can not now be told with any degree of certainty. Neither the occasional presence of missionaries nor the periodical visits of fur traders, nor the building of rude temporary trading posts, can be regarded as the founding of permanent civilized settlements.

In 1672 the Indians who resided in the country about the southern shores of Lake Michigan were visited by the missionaries Allouez and Dablon, who opened the way for several subsequent but almost fruitless attempts to establish missions within the territory of the Miamies. Among the missionaries who visited this territory between the years 1672 and 1712 were Ribourde, Mambre, Hennepin, Marquette, Pinet, Bineteau, Joliet, Rasles, Periet, Bergier, Mermet, Marest, Gravier, DeVille and Chardon. The history of the missionary labors of these men is a record of perseverance, disappointment and suffering. The efforts of Christian missionaries have been often embarrassed and sometimes wholly paralyzed by obstacles which were based upon the adverse religious tenets and the political stratagems of rival Christian nations. For a period of one hundred and fifty years, Protestant England and Catholic France were rivals in the great works of acquiring territory, planting colonies and establishing trade among the Indian tribes of North America.

Of the missionaries of these two nations few were free from the influence of the hostile rivalry which was brought into action and maintained by their respective governments.

In the year 1687 Governor Dongan, an officer of the English government, met the Five Nations in council at Albany, and made to them a speech in which he said: "My opinion is, that the [Indian] brethren should send messengers to the Utawawas, Twightwees [or Miamies], and the farther Indians, and to send back, likewise, some of the prisoners of these nations, if you have any left, to bury the hatchet, and to make a covenant chain, *that they may put away all the French that are among them*, and that you will open a path for them this way * * * that, by that means, they may come hither freely, where they may have everything cheaper than among the French. * * * There was no advice or proposition that I made to the [Indian] brethren all the time that the priest lived at Onondaga, but what he wrote to Canada, as I found by one of his letters which he gave to an Indian to carry to Canada, but which was brought hither; therefore, I desire the brethren not to receive him or any *French* priest any more, having sent for *English* priests with whom you may be supplied to your content."

Among a number of reasons which were assigned for the planting of British colonies in New England there was one which declared that it would "be a service unto the church of great consequence to carry the gospel into those parts of the world and raise a bulwark agafnst the kingdom of anti-Christ, which the Jesuits labor to rear up in all parts of the world."

The Reverend Cotton Mather, in his Ecclesiastical History of New England, says that in the year 1696 an Indian chief informed a Christian minister of Boston that the French, while instructing the Indians in the Christian religion, told them that the Savior was of the French nation; "that they were

the English who had murdered him, and that, whereas he rose from the dead and went up to the heavens, all that would recommend themselves unto his favor must revenge his quarrel upon the English."

Thus, in North America, throughout a long period, between the early colonists of England and the early colonists of France there was no friendly intercourse; there was no long season of peace. Ever eager to advance the interests of their respective governments, small and weak branches of Christian nations, with antagonistic creeds, hot animosities, bitter revilings and deadly warfare, were agitating and destroying one another. The Indians heard and saw and felt these things, and listened doubtingly to the instructions of the few pious men who told them that the truths of the Christian religion were revealed to the world by the son of the only true God, to establish on earth "peace and good-will towards men."

By means of the persevering efforts of missionaries, and by the enterprise of a few adventurous traders, pacific relations and a small traffic were established between the Miamies and the French colonists of Canada before the close of the seventeenth century. The governor-general of Canada laid before the English colonial authorities at Albany in 1684 a remonstrance, in which it was stated that the Five Nations (between whom and the English a league then existed) were interfering with the rights and property of French traders among the remote western Indian tribes. The Five Nations, when they were informed of this charge, replied by saying that their enemies were furnished with arms and ammunition by French traders. Soon afterwards the governor-general of Canada held a council with a large number of Indians of the Five Nations. He told them that they, the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas and Mohawks, had abused and robbed French traders who were passing to the west. Grangula, an Onondaga chief, in replying to the charge said:

"We plundered none of the French but those that carried guns, powder and balls to the Twightwees [Miamies] and the Chictaghicks, because those arms might have cost us our lives. * * * We knock the Twightwees and the Chictaghicks on the head because they had cut down the trees of peace, which were the limits of our country. They have hunted beaver on our lands. They have acted contrary to the custom of all Indians, for they left none of the beavers alive; they killed both male and female. * * * We have done less than either the English or the French, that have usurped the lands of so many Indian nations and chased them from their own country."

After the discovery by La Salle of the mouth of the river Mississippi, the government of France began to encourage a project of establishing a line of trading posts and missionary stations, in the country lying west of the Allegheny mountains, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico; and this project was supported by France with considerable perseverance, but with only partial success, for a period of about seventy-five years. During a longer period the zealous labors of French missionaries among the Indian tribes of the west were continued, amid many obstacles, without producing much general and permanent improvement of the condition of the aborigines.

The missionary Hennepin visited some of the tribes of the Miami confederacy in 1680:

"There are," says Hennepin, "many obstacles that hinder the conversion of the savages, but in general the difficulty proceeds from the indifferency they have to everything. When one speaks to them of the creation of the world and of the mysteries of the Christian religion they say we have reason, and they applaud in general all that we say on the great affair of our salvation. They would think themselves guilty of a great incivility if they should show the least suspicion or

incredulity in respect of what is proposed. But, after having approved all the discourses upon these matters, they pretend likewise on their side that we ought to pay all possible deference to the relations and reasonings that they may make on their part, and when we make answer that what they tell us is false, they reply that they have acquiesced to all that we said, and that it is a want of judgment to interrupt a man that speaks and to tell him that he advances a false proposition; all that you have taught touching those of your country is as you say—but it is not the same to us, who are of another nation, and inhabit the lands which are on this side the great lake. The second obstacle which hinders their conversion proceeds from their great superstition."

The third obstacle, says the same missionary, "consists in this, that they are not fixed to a place," and "the traders who deal commonly with the savages with a design to gain by their traffic are likewise another obstacle. * * * They think of nothing but cheating and lying to become rich in a short time. They use all manner of stratagems to get the furs of the savages cheap. They make use of lies and cheats to gain double if they can. This, without doubt, causes an aversion against a religion which they see accompanied, by the professors of it, with so many lies and cheats."

"The Illinois," says Hennepin, "will readily suffer us to baptize their children, and would not refuse it themselves but they are incapable of any previous instruction concerning the truths of the gospel, and the efficacy of the sacraments. Would I follow the example of some other missionaries I could have boasted of many conversions, for I might easily have baptized all those nations, and then say (as I am afraid they do without any ground), that I had converted them. * * * Our ancient missionaries of Canada, and those that succeeded them in that work, have always given it for

their opinion, as I now own it is mine, that the way to succeed in converting the barbarians is to endeavor to make them men before we go about to make them Christians. * * * America is no place to go out of a desire to suffer martyrdom, taking the word in a theological sense. The savages never put any Christian to death on the score of his religion. They leave everybody at liberty in belief. They like the outward ceremonies of our church; but no more. * * * They do not kill people but in particular quarrels, or when they are brutish, or drunk, or in revenge, or infatuated with a dream, or some extravagant vision. They are incapable of taking away any person's life out of hatred to his religion."

The Miamies, or Twightwees, were visited by missionaries before the year 1670, and Allouez, it is said, founded the principal mission to these Indians on the banks of St. Joseph of Lake Michigan. An account of the religious exercises which were observed by the early missionaries among the Illinois Indians is related in a letter written by P. Gabriel Marest, at Kaskaskia, on the 9th of November, 1712. That missionary said: "The following is the order we observe each day in our missions. Early in the morning we assemble the catechumens at the church, where they have prayers; they receive instructions and chant some canticles. When they have retired mass is said, at which all the Christians assist, the men placed at one side and the women at the other; then they have prayers, which are followed by giving them a homily, after which each one goes to his labor. We then spend our time in visiting the sick to give them necessary remedies, to instruct them and to console those who are laboring under any affliction. After noon the catechising is held, at which all are present, Christians and catechumens, men and children, young and old; and where each, without distinction of rank or age, answers the questions put by the missionary. As these people have no books and are natur-

ally indolent, they would shortly forget the principles of religion if the remembrance of them was not recalled by these almost continual instructions. In the evening all assemble again at the church to listen to the instructions which are given, to have prayers, and to sing some hymns. * * * These hymns are their best instructions, which they retain the more easily, since the words are set to airs with which they are acquainted and which please them."

The river St. Joseph of Lake Michigan was called the river of the Miamies in 1679, in which year La Salle built a fort or trading post on its banks and near the shore of the lake. The principal station in the mission of St. Joseph, which was founded for the instruction of the Pottawattamies and Miamies, was established on the banks of this river; and, from the foundation of this mission, the river bore the name of the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan.

The missionary Hennepin gives the following account of the building of the first French post within the country of the Miamies: "Just at the mouth of the river Miamies there was an eminence with a kind of a platform naturally fortified; it was pretty high and steep, of a triangular form, defended on two sides by the river, and on the third by a deep ditch which the fall of the waters had made. We felled the trees that were on the top of that hill and cleared the same from bushes for about two musket-shot; we then began to build a redoubt forty foot by eighty, with great square pieces of timber laid one upon another, and prepared a great number of stakes of about twenty-five feet long, to drive into the ground to make our fort the more inaccessible on the river sides. We employed the whole month of November [1679] about the work, which was very hard, though we had no other food but the bears' flesh our savage killed. These beasts are very common in that place because of the great quantity

of grapes they find there, but their flesh being too fat and luscious our men began to weary of it, and desired leave to go a hunting to kill some wild goats [or deer]. M. La Salle denied that liberty, which caused some murmurs amongst them, and it was but unwillingly that they continued their work. This, together with the approach of the winter, and the apprehension M. La Salle had that his ship was lost, made him very melancholy, though he concealed it as much as he could. We had made a cabin wherein we performed divine service every Sunday, and Father Gabriel and I, who preached alternately, took care to take such texts as were suitable to our present circumstances and fit to inspire us with courage, concord and brotherly love. Our exhortations produced a very good effect and hindered the men from deserting, as they designed. We sounded in the meantime the mouth of the river, and having found a sand on which our ship might strike, we fixed two great posts therein, to which we fastened bears' skins, as so many buoys to direct the course of our ship through the channel she ought to pass; and, for a greater precaution, two men were sent back to Missilimakinak, to wait there till the return of our ship and serve as pilots. * * * The fort was at last perfected and called Fort Miamis."

In 1711, the missionary Chardon, who was "full of zeal and who had a rare talent for acquiring languages," had his station on the river St. Joseph, among the Pottawattamie and Miami Indians.

In 1721, about fifty years after the time that Allouez and Dablon traversed the country lying on the southern shores of Lake Michigan, Charlevoix visited a trading post on the river St. Joseph, where there was a missionary station. In a letter dated "River St. Joseph, August 16, 1721," Charlevoix says—"It was eight days yesterday since I arrived at this post, where we have a mission, and where there is a com-

mandant with a small garrison. The commandant's house, which is but a sorry one, is called the fort, from its being surrounded with an indifferent pallisado, which is pretty near the case in all the rest. * * * We have here two villages of Indians, one of the Miamies and the other of the Pottawattamies, both of them mostly Christians; but as they have been for a long time without any pastors, the missionary who has lately been sent them will have no small difficulty in bringing them back to the exercise of their religion. * * * Several Indians of the two nations settled upon this river are just returned from the English colonies, whither they had been to sell their furs, and from whence they have brought back in return a great quantity of spirituous liquors. The distribution of it is made in the *usual manner;* that is to say, a certain number of persons have daily delivered to each of them *a quantity sufficient to get drunk with*, so that the whole has been drank up in eight days. They began to drink in both villages as soon as the sun was down, and every night the fields echoed with the most hideous howlings. One would have thought that a gang of devils had broke loose from hell, or that the two towns had been cutting one another's throats."

More than one hundred years have passed away after Charlevoix wrote this letter, yet spirituous liquors and riotous drunkenness, maintaining their power among the passing generations of the aboriginal race of North America, were still opposing and baffling the labors of Protestant and Catholic missionaries, not only at Indian towns on the banks of the St. Joseph, but at every Indian village throughout the northwestern territory of the United States.

Sebastian Rasles, a missionary, in a letter which is dated "12th October, 1723," says—"It is a blessing to the Illinois that they are so far distant from Quebec, because it renders it impossible to transport to them the 'fire water' as it is

carried to others. This drink among the Indians is the greatest obstacle to Christianity, and the source of an infinite number of their most shocking crimes. We know that they never purchase it but to plunge into the most furious intoxication; and the riots and sad deaths of which we were each day the witnesses ought to outweigh the gain which can be made by the trade in a liquor so fatal."

Another missionary, Vivier, in a letter dated "at Illinois, the 17th of November, 1750," says—"We have three stations in this part of the world, one of Indians, one of French, and a third composed partly of French and partly of Indians. The first contains more than six hundred Illinois, all baptized, with the exception of five or six, but the 'fire water' which is sold to them by the French, and especially by the soldiers, in spite of the reiterated prohibitions on the part of the king, and that which is sometimes distributed to them under pretext of maintaining them in our interest, has ruined that mission and caused the greater part of its converts to abandon our holy religion. The Indians, and especially the Illinois, who at other times are the gentlest and most tractable of men, become, when intoxicated, frantic and brutally ferocious. Then they attack each other with their knives, inflicting terrible wounds. Some have lost their ears, and others a part of the nose in these tragical scenes."

The Miamies were visited in 1751 by Christopher Gist, who was an agent of the Ohio company. In his journal of that visit he says: "The Twightwees (Miamies) are a very numerous people, consisting of many different tribes under the same form of government. Each tribe has a particular chief or king, one of whom is chosen indifferently out of any tribe to rule the whole nation, and is vested with greater authority than any of the others. They are accounted the most powerful nation to the westward of the English settlements, and much superior to the Six Nations, with whom they are now in

amity. They formerly lived on the farther side of the Wabash, and were in the French interests. They have now revolted from them and have left their former habitations for the sake of trading with the English." The "revolted" Miamies, however, renewed their friendship and intercourse with the French in 1753.

In 1754, George Croghan, a British officer in the Indian department, visited some of the western tribes. The following passages are taken from his journal: "On the 14th of January we set off to Logstown, where we found the *Indians all drunk.*" "January 16th the *Indians were all drunk.*" "From the 16th to the 26th we could do nothing, the *Indians being all drunk.*" In 1765, the Miami nation or confederacy was composed of four tribes whose total number of warriors was estimated at one thousand and fifty men. Of this number there were two hundred and fifty Twightwees, three hundred Weas or Ouiatenons, three hundred Piankeshaws and two hundred Shockeys. The principal villages of the Twightwees were situated on the head waters of the Maumee river, at or near the site of the town of Ft. Wayne. The larger Wea villages were found near the banks of the Wabash, in the vicinity of Ouiatenon, and the Shockeys and Piankeshaws lived on the banks of the Vermillion river, and on the river Wabash between Vincennes and Ouiatenon. At different periods branches of Pottawattamies, Shawnees, Delawares and Kickapoos were permitted to enter and reside at various places within the boundary of the large territory which was claimed by the Miamies. On the 15th of April, 1784, Thomas J. Dalton held a council with the Piankeshaws tribe of the Miamies at Vincennes. At the close of the council the principal Piankeshaw chief said: "This being the day of Joy to the Wabash Indians we beg a little drop of your milk (meaning rum) to let our warriors see it came from your own breast. We were born and raised in the woods. We never

could learn to make rum. God has made the white flesh masters of the world. They make everything, and we all love rum."

In a letter which was written at Vincennes on the 16th of June, 1793, and addressed to Winthrop Sargent, secretary of the territory of the United States northwest of the river Ohio the writer said:

"There are parties of Indians continually coming to and going from this place, where they are furnished with liquor for their skins in such quantities as they are able to pay for—which disturbs much the good order and peace of the village. They remain here eight or ten days, which is one continual round of drunkenness and disorder. * * * The laws are worse executed at this place than at any other in the territory. There are but few of the inhabitants of this village that do not violate that part of the law which prohibits the sale of spirituous liquors to Indians."

In the summer of 1796 a distinguished traveler and author, Constantine Francis Volney, went to Vincennes, partly to observe at his leisure the Indian tribes in that quarter. In one of his works this traveler says: "My stay at Vincennes afforded me some knowledge of the Indians who were assembled to barter away the produce of their red hunt. There were four or five hundred of them, men, women and children of various tribes, as the Weas, Peorias, Sawkies, Piankeshaws and Miamies. * * * The men and women roamed all day about the town merely to get rum, for which they eagerly exchanged their peltry, their toys, their clothes, and at length, when they had parted with their all, they offered their prayers and entreaties, never ceasing to drink until they had lost their senses. Hence arise ridiculous scenes. They will hold the cup with both hands like monkeys, burst into unmeaning laughter and gargle their beloved cup, to enjoy the taste of it the longer. They will hand about the liquor with clamorous

invitations, bawl aloud to each other though close together, seize their wives and pour the liquor down their throats, and, in short, display all the freaks of vulgar drunkenness. Sometimes tragical scenes ensue. They become mad or stupid and fall in the dust or mud to lie a senseless log till the next day. We found them in the streets by dozens in the morning, wallowing in the filth with the pigs. * * * I at first conceived the design of spending a few months among them, as I had done among the Bedouins, but I was satisfied with this sample."

On the 5th of November, 1805, Governor Harrison, of the Indiana territory, addressed to Governor Tiffin, of Ohio, a letter from which the following passage is copied: "Conformably to the request of the legislature of this territory, I have the honor to enclose herewith a law passed at the late session, entitled 'An act to prohibit the giving or selling of intoxicating liquor to Indians.' Your excellency will observe that the law is not to take effect until a similar one is passed by the states of Kentucky and Ohio and the territories of Louisiana and Michigan. The necessity of this provision arose from the great inconvenience which the citizens who reside on the frontiers of this territory would suffer if the prohibition to sell liquor to Indians did not extend to their neighbors as well as to themselves. With regard to the propriety of the prohibition it is I presume unnecessary that I should make a single remark. The dreadful effects which have been produced among our Indian neighbors, *by the immense quantities of ardent spirits which have been poured in upon them by our citizens*, have long been known and lamented by every friend of humanity."

In the message addressed to the Indiana territorial legislature in 1806, Governor Harrison said: "It is true that the general government has passed laws for fulfilling not only the stipulations contained in our treaties (with the Indians) but

also those sublimer duties which a just sense of our prosperity and their wretchedness seemed to impose. The laws of the territory provide also the same punishment for offenses committed against Indians as against white men. *Experience, however, shows that there is a wide difference in the execution of those laws. The Indian always suffers and the white man never.* This partiality has not escaped their penetration and has afforded them an opportunity of making the proudest comparisons between their observance of treaties and that of their boasted superiors."

A letter dated "May 3d, 1814," written by an officer of the general government to a gentleman who held a high official station, contains the following remarkable passages: "The idea of a treaty will fix the attention of the Indian and will keep them quiet for the present. I have (caused) the information of the treaty (with this view) to be spread far and wide in the Indian country; in order to insure a general attendance of the remote tribes, two months notice will be requisite. I have such channels of intelligence established through the Indians that nothing of importance can be going forward without my knowledge. They are so much distracted and divided now that no scheme of hostility against us could be carried into effect. With the view of increasing their wants and distresses and thereby rendering them more harmless, I have permitted all the traders to sell as much liquor as they thought proper. This in a political point of view, at this time, is of more effect than many would suppose."

The treaty referred to in this extract was concluded at Greenville, in July, 1814. The Miamies, who were present, expressed with great earnestness a wish to remain neutral in the war which was then going on between the United States and Great Britain, but one of the commissioners of the United States government said to them: "You have now come

forward to take us by the hand; we are equally anxious and willing to take you by the hand, but you must take up the tomahawk and with us strike our enemies. Then your great father, the President, will forgive the past."

I will read two short extracts from the official journal of the commissioners at this treaty: "July 16th, 1814—The council adjourned after giving instructions to the agent to furnish the Indians with whisky to whet their hatchets, etc." "July 18th, 1814—The Indians having received a quantity of whisky in order to sharpen their hatchets, as they expected, were unfit for any business this day."

The national character and the condition of the Miamies in 1817 were faithfully described in a letter written by Benjamin F. Stickney, an Indian agent who resided among them. This agent, writing at Fort Wayne on the 27th of August, 1817, said: "The civilization of the Indian is not a new subject to me. I have been between five and six years in the habit of daily and hourly intercourse with the Indians northwest of the Ohio, and the great question of the practicability of civilizing them ever before me. * * * That I might have an opportunity of casting in my mite to the bettering the condition of these uncultivated human beings and the pleasure of observing the change that might be produced upon them was the principal inducement to my surrendering the comforts of civilized society. Upon my entering upon my duties I soon found that my speculative opinions were not reducible to practice. What I had viewed at a distance as flying clouds, proved on my nearer approach to be impassable mountains. * * * It will be proper for me to be more particular and give you something of my ideas of the nature and extent of the obstacles to be met.

"First. The great, and I fear, insurmountable obstacle, is the insatiable thirst for intoxicating liquors that appears to be born with all the yellow skin inhabitants of America. And

the thirst for gain of the citizens of the United States appears to be capable of eluding all the vigilance of government to stop the distribution of liquor among them. * * * If the whites can not be restrained from furnishing them with spirituous liquors nor they from the use of them, I fear all other efforts to extend to them the benefits of civilization will prove fruitless. The knowledge of letters serves as the means of entering into secret arrangements with the whites to supply the means of their own destruction; and within the limits of my intercourse, *the principal use of the knowledge of letters or civilized language has been to obtain liquor for themselves and others*. This has made it proverbial among them that the knowledge of white people makes very bad Indians.

"Secondly. The general aversion to the habits, manners, customs and dress of civilized people; and in many cases an Indian is an object of jealousy for being acquainted with the civilized language, and it is made use of as a subject of reproach against him.

"Thirdly. General indolence, connected with the firm conviction that the life of the civilized man is that of slavery—and that savage life is manhood, ease and independence—from which proceeds the opinion among them that to say a white man is equal to an Indian is the highest compliment that can be paid him.

"Fourthly. The unfavorable light in which they view the citizens of the United States—believing that their minds are so much occupied in trade and speculation that they never act from any other motive—and that they universally lie to and cheat them. Their opinion of the government of the United States is in some degrees more favorable, but secretly they view all white people as their enemies and are extremely suspicious of anything coming from them, and if they had the

power they would extirpate, or at least drive them all from the continent.

"Fifthly. Their extreme fondness for their children, and fear of their being absent from their sight You request to be informed in relation to their numbers and manner of living, and whether they have had any schools or missionaries among them. All the Miamies and Eel River Miamies are under my charge and about one thousand four hundred in number, and there are something more than two thousand Pottawattamies come within my agency. The proportion of children can not be ascertained, but it is much less than among the white inhabitants of the United States. They have had no schools among them nor missionaries since the time of the French Jesuits. They have places that are commonly called villages, but perhaps not correctly, as they have no uniform place of residence. During the fall, winter and part of the spring, they are scattered in the woods hunting. The respective bands assemble together in the spring at their several ordinary places of resort, where some have rude cabins made of small logs covered with bark, but more commonly, some poles stuck in the ground and tied together with pliant stripes of bark, and covered with large sheets of bark or a kind of mat made of flags. Near those places of resort they plant some corn. There are eleven of those places of resort called villages within my agency. The Miamies and Eel River Miamies reside principally on the Wabash, Mississinewa and Eel rivers and the head of the White river. The Pottawattamies reside on the Tippecanoe, Kankakee, Iroquois, Yellow river, St. Joseph and Iroquois of Lake Michigan, the Elkhart, Miami of the Lake, the St. Joseph emptying into it and the St. Mary's river.

"Inasmuch as you contemplate the introduction of the Christian religion through the medium of letters you will wish to know something of their present religion. They all

believe in a God as Creator and Governor, but have no idea of His will being communicated to man except as it appears in the creation, or as it appears occasionally from His providential government. Some of them have been told of the communications having been made to the white people a long time since—and that it is written and printed—but they have neither conception or belief in relation to it. Their belief in relation to a future existence is a kind of transubstantiation—a removal from this existence to one more happy, with similar appetites and enjoyments. They talk of a Bad Spirit, but never express any apprehension of his troubling them in their future existence. They pay respect to the religious opinions of others and appear to conceive that the same is due theirs in return. There is no people who appear to be more firmly fixed in their theological faith. The Jesuits made some impression on a few of them with the external form of their religion but taught them no science."

Now, by the aid of various authentic documents, I have traced faintly the outlines of the history of the Miami Indians backwards from the present time through a period of one hundred and fifty years. Yet even these faint outlines form a long and mournful picture of ignorance, superstition, war, barbarity and the most debasing intemperance. There are some sincere and good men, who, successfully entering the field of missionary labor, endeavored to establish among these Indians the foundation of civilization and the doctrine of Christianity. But these philanthropists were few in number —with an imperfect knowledge of the language of the Miamies—without schools, without homes, often placing their lives in peril, and in some instances falling the victims of savage violence. They were, in the west, the pioneers in the conflict between barbarism and civilization. At the present day a few small, mixed and miserable bands constitute the remnant of the once powerful Miami nation. Their igno-

rance, their errors, their misfortune and devices which they learned from the white race still cling to them with unabated power to degrade and destroy. Thus shrouded in darkness, with the lights of civilization and religion beaming around them, the last fragments of one of the most powerful aboriginal nations of North America are passing away from the earth forever. The arms of the Miamies are now powerless. Their last lingering bands are slowly tottering towards the grave of their nation. Sometimes they pause on their way and turn their faces to the east, to cast their latest reproaches upon their conquerors. Listen! Do they not say to us: 'Men of the white race, you are faithless. You drive us onward towards the setting sun. We shall go down in the west like him. He will rise again, but we shall be seen no more upon the earth. Our nation is dying and it received its death wounds from you. You came to our land in weakness many years ago when we were strong. You promised to enlighten our minds. You promised to make us acquainted with the arts of civilized life. You promised to establish schools among us. You promised to teach us a pure and holy religion. When you became strong you told us that we were your children. And you taught us to call you our father. You spoke of peace on earth and good-will to men, but you made war on one another. How could we believe your words? We gave you leave to establish trading posts in our country. And you brought your fire-water to your posts, and with that fire-water you made those places the scenes of drunkenness, lying, theft, profanity, debauchery and murder. You did those things for the love of gold. You promised us blessings—they never came to us, but you taught us vices and crimes of which we were ignorant until you became our instructors. You have used your superior knowledge to deceive and debase our nation. You have poured your fire-water over our whole land. You have used your superior strength to destroy us. You have

violated the treaties which you have made with us. You entered our country by force; you took possession of our lands; you told your warriors to strike us hard; you drove us from our homes; you killed our men and women; you destroyed our scanty crops of corn that we might starve; you gave our villages to the flames that we might be homeless. You have encouraged jealousies, divisions and enmities between our different tribes that we might be powerless. You told us that you were our protectors. Our protectors! When or where did your strong arm ever strike a white oppressor of the Indian race? Behold us now! Where are the lands of our nation? Where is our nation? Where are our homes? Where is the civilization that you promised to bring to us, to enlighten our benighted minds? Where are the arts you promised to teach us? Where are the schools that you promised to establish among us? Where is that holy religion of which you told us? Oh! You are a strong, false, false race." Have civilized nations nothing to say in reply to such reproachful language? Yes. The philanthropist of the white race might say to the departing red man: "We found you in a state of ignorance and barbarism. We sent good men among you to enlighten your minds and to teach you the purifying doctrines of the Christian religion. You disregarded their instruction. We warned you constantly of the evils which your love of the fire-water would bring upon your nation. You neglected our warning and you madly continued to indulge your appetite for the liquid poison. We tried to establish agriculture and other useful arts among you, but you turned away from the plow and the school and the missionary station to roam in the forests, or to revel in drunkenness, or to seek the war path. We carried many of your race to our colleges and universities where they were educated in the knowledge of the white people, but, with few exceptions, they returned to the wilderness and relapsed into the customs of

their tribe. We have tried many expedients to save your nation from ruin. We gave you warning after warning of the fate which awaited you if you continued to neglect our advice. We tried to treat you with forbearance, moderation and humanity even when your tomahawks and scalping knives were red with the blood of our murdered men, women and children. From generation to generation, with unyielding and unreasonable obstinacy, you stood in the way of advancing civilization and Christianity, and when neither our kindness, nor our entreaties, nor our threats were sufficiently powerful to induce you to move, we were compelled in sorrow to force you from your position by the might of a strong arm. The land which you once claimed was not made to remain forever a wilderness, to be used only as a vast hunting ground for the race of red men.''